Stoddard's
Dramatization of
Tess of the d'Urbervilles.
(Written 1896 -)

This, with its modifications, is the American play constructed on the basis of the rough dramatization of "Tess" sent to America by request. It appears to have small artistic or literary merit, so far as can be judged superficially.

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Th. H. (1920)

American adaptation -
(afterwards improved in slight details)-

-:- 'TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES'-:-

DRAMATIZATION IN FOUR ACTS

BY

LORIMER STODDARD.

-:- C H A R A C T E R S -:-

ANGEL CLARE.

ALEC D'URBERVILLE.

MR. CRICK.

JONATHAN)

JAMES) Farm hands.

TIM)

A SHERIFF

JOHN DURBEYFIELD, Otherwise Sir John.

ABRAHAM His son, a boy of 12.

JOAN DURBEYFIELD, His wife.

TESS, their daughter. 'Tess o' the D'Urbervilles.'

LIZA LOO, her sister, a little girl.

MARION)

IZZ) MILKMAIDS.

BETTY)

-:-A C T I-:-

S c e n e:- The yard of Mr. Crik's house. To the left is a part of the house itself, which has a sort of enclosed portico under the low roof. To the right is a one story building where 'Angel Clare' sleeps. It has a door and a window with a wide sill. There are milking stools, a bench at left, a wheel-barrow etc. At the back is the rolling country, a gateway and a bit of hedge on each side of it. It is just after sunset. The long bright twilight of an English summer. Light enough to read. The whole scene is pastoral and beautiful.

JOAN, ~~SIR JOHN~~ and ABRAHAM enter through the gate from right.

Abraham.
Oh, mother what a grand house! Is it there that Tess lives? I do not wonder she left Marlott.

Joan.
Just 'ee wait--- she'll have as grand a place all her own. If she be not a fool Abraham.

Abraham.
Oh, it's the biggest house I ever saw. Bigger than the Parsons.

Sir John.
'Tis big, but 'tis not old. The antiquireens would have none of it. 'tis not a pinch to what our mansion was.

Abraham.
Ours, father?

Joan.

The ancient home of the D'Ubervilles. 'Twas built in King John's time. King John! I be Sir John! Mayhap he was a cousin of the house. The Antiquireens --

Joan.

(Impatiently.)
Oh peace to the Antiquireens and the past. We have the present and Tess's future -- our future to deal with, but I fear she be a fool.

Abraham.

Our Tess a fool, mother?

Joan.

Oh run away.

Sir John.

Joan, no D'Uberville can be a fool. We be the oldest family in the land.

Joan.

Age be no prevention against foolishness. She be a fool, to write to me and ask is she could tell! And what's the use o'telling, I says? A shut mouth spills no ale.

Sir John.

Telling o' what? The history of our family?

Joan.

No, no, her own.

Sir John.

'Tis a thing to be proud of! There's not a family in all the County o'Wessex that's got nobler skeletons in his family vault than I.

Joan.

(Sitting on the bench.)
Her history be a common one, alack.

Sir John.

And to think that if Parson Trigham, the Antiquireen of Stagport Lane had not a' told me, I'd still think I was plain

John Durbeyfield, and never should a'known I'd be a baronet, and --

Joan.

Drat the Antiquireens! Has the drink muddled your head John?

Sir John.

Sir John! Sir John!

Joan.

Did I not tell 'ee Tess had written me that Mr. Angel Clare son of the parson, wants to marry her? That's why we be here.

Sir John.

To show ourselves to him -- that is me.

Joan.

No! No! To keep her from telling.

Sir John.

Of what?

Joan.

The other one. She writes and asks me if she ought not to tell him.

Sir John.

About our noble family?

Joan.

Thou art beriddled! To tell him of the child - her child and Alec D'Uberville and all. She be a fool to dream of it. She'll not let this chance slip like the other one.

Sir John.

Aye. That would have been a grand match, though Alec D'Uberville be but of a younger branch and far distant, still, he be a D'Uberville too and rich.

Joan.

She might have been his wife today if she had not yielded to him. He'll never marry her now, nor the other, Mr. Clare, if he learns of it and the child. Thank the Lord it be dead, bless its soul.

Sir John.

'Twas a double D'Uberville. It should lie in the family vault

if it be left handed.

Joan.

And to think o'telling Mr. Clare, a gentleman of things like that, and spoiling everything. Gentlemen, I tell 'ee don't like such things in their wives.

Sir John.

I'll speak to him. I be the head of the family -

Joan.

Had I been on hand, she might a' married Alec D'Uberville, if she was but a dairymaid on his place. Mark 'ee, if she lose Mr. Clare, he will come forward. He's looking for her. He came to me today, but I put him off as to where she was working, as he would spoil this game. Oh, to tell of it! Think! Why we'd be rich too, if she'll hold her tongue.

Sir John.

Rich! 'Twould be but right. I was thinking o' selling the title to Mr. Alec for a thousand pounds, or --- or fifty, not a penny less. I could live like a baronet, then.

Joan.

You could live like a baronet and I like a lady. Oh John, we coild keep a cow!

Sir John.

She shall not speak. I will command her.

Joan.

No, let me. I was but a milkmaid yet I have a woman's wit.

Abraham.

(At the window at left.)

Oh, mother! Look! Look! What be this?

Joan.

Why, it is a harp.

Abraham.

A harp. And see mother, there be carpet -- red carpet on the floor.

(A burst of laughter from within the farm house at left.)

Joan.

They be at supper.

Abraham.

It makes me hungry.

Sir John.

I be thirsty.

Abraham.

I did not hear Tess laugh. I should think she'd laugh the loudest, mother, if she be going to be a lady.

Sir John.

Let's go in. I be thirsty. Being a baronet, they may offer us some ale.

Joan.

No, no. I must get at Tess first, alone. Let's go to the Inn and get a drop o' gin. Abraham, wait round and let me know when they be through.

(Joan and Sir John go through the gate. Abraham wanders round Clare's house. ANGEL CLARE and MR. CRIK come from the farm-house at right. More laughter inside.)

Clare.

I'll figure this up and bring it to you, Mr. Crik. The noise in there disturbs me.

Crik.

(On the end of the portico.)

I'm willing to go into it as far as I said, Mr. Clare, that is, if your calculation comes out as I think.

Joan.

'Tis he, Tess's man.

Clare.

I'm sure it will be a good investment. My time of service - of learning farming from you, I mean, will be up in two weeks. I shall go to Brazil in a month - that is, if--

Crik.

I understand. You mean if Tess will go with you. She'll make a good wife, I've seen it all along.

Clare.

Yes, it's true. If she can't make up her mind, I shall go to Caracas earlier. I'll bring this to you as soon as I

finish it.

Crik.

I expect a man tonight who wants your place here. It will be hard to replace you. You'll make a good farmer if you are a gentleman.

(Goes into the farmhouse.)

Sir John.

(Opening the gate.)

It would be best for me to address him.

Joan

(Pulling him back.)

No, no, the drink first.

(Sir John hesitates, then they go off L.)

Clare.

(pausing at his door which is opened.)

A month of this calm life. And then, a new one in a new world. A new world with Tess and I alone in it, perhaps. Why does she put me off so? She says she loves me. Well, she's a woman! Brazil with her seems -- paradise. Fifty sheep at twenty shilling a head will be -

(Goes in and closes the door. RETTY, IZZ and MARION comes from the farm-house laughing.)

Marion.

Jonathan'll keep his promise, I tell 'ee.

Retty.

Fie! Shame on ye!

(The light shines through Clare's window.)

Retty.

(With a gasp.)

Look! He has lighted his lamp!

(The others stop laughing.)

Izz.

Yes, he's reading or writing.

(They all sigh.)

Retty.

'Tis a beacon light.

Izz.

Aye, for the shipwrecked.

Marion

No, 'tis a candle flame! And your wings be scorched by it, foolish moth!

Retty.

And so be yours, and yours, Izz.

Marion.

Nonsense, Retty.

Retty.

I know you love him.

Izz.

Who would not? 'tis not because he is so good.

Retty.

Nor so very handsome.

Marion

'Tis because he's different from the men you see. A gentleman, the son of a parson learning how to farm, be no common thing. How foolish you be! The likes o' us! His thoughts be of xx other cheeks than thine.

Izz.

Retty do love him.

Retty

You need not say anything, for I seed you kissing his shade.

Marion

What did you see her doing?

Retty.

He was standing by they whey tub, and the shade of his face fell upon the wall close to Izz. She set her mouth against the wall and kissed the shade o' his mouth. I seed it, though he didn't.

Marion.

Oh, Izz Hewett!

Izz.

There was no harm in it, you need not talk.

Retty.

The other night I heard you cry in your sleep, "Angel Clare,

Oh Angel Clare, I love thee,' and then Marion, you woke, and wept.

Marion.

I -- I -- Oh 'tis nonsense! He'll never come and ask the likes of us to marry him. He's going away to be a great land owner and farmer abroad. More likely to ask us to come with him as farm hands, to so much a year. Oh, 'tis foolishness!

Retty

'tis not foolishness since he loves Tess. She be one of us.

Izz.

Ah, but she's been to school. She can write like a lady, and read -- books.

Retty

So can you.

Izz

I can -- but I do not -- nor do you, save the marriage service. I saw you.

Retty.

I wonder what he be doing.

Marion.

You must not peep.

Retty.

I'm not peeping. I be but looking.

Izz

Surely, 'tis no more harm to look in a window than to look out of it. If Mr. Clare chose to look at me --

Marion.

He would not move to see you.

Retty.

Don't push! You be dying to look yourself.

Marion.

Let's all of us.

(They peep in the window.)

Retty

Is he not handsome?

Marion

Aye. Tess does not value him.

Izz

I know she does, she loves him.

Marion

Why does she put him off?

Retty

She be a woman.

Marion

Would you?

Retty

I have no chance -- nor any of us. We can weep together. She be the prettiest and the best. I do not blame him.

Izz

Do ye remember how he carried the four of us over the stream that Sunday?

Marion and Retty

Yes.

Izz.

He took the longest carrying Tess.

Marion

She be heavier.

Retty

No you be.

Izz

I thought I'd faint.

Retty

He told me I had a little foot.

Marion.

Men do not marry for little feet.

Retty.

No, nor for big ones either.

Izz

Look! look! He moves I would he would play his harp.

Retty.

Last night I lay awake and listened.

Marion

And wept.

Retty

I did.

Izz

He's going away soon, and Tess will go with him.

Retty.

Draw close. We must feast our poor eyes every minute that we can.

Marion

(Half to herself.)

"Going away?"

Izz.

"To Brazil?"

Retty.

"With Tess?"

Izz.

Don't 'ee cry.

Retty.

Don't you! Don't you.

(They stand, their arms around each other, looking in the window.)

(Enter from the farmhouse, JONATHAN and JAMES.)

Jonathan.

Look!

James.

They be daft, the whole women folk. Just because he be a gentleman.

Jonathan.

And can play the harp.

James.

Wait.

(he steals up behind them and gives them all a hug.)

Retty

How you startled me!

Marion

I thought it was the devil. To the devil with you!

Jonathan.

I have something that will make you go there -- gin!
(They all sit. Marion drinks from his bottle.)

Marion

'Tis raw.

Rett.

Marion, you should not drink so.

Marion

I never drink till work is done, and 'tis but a drop.

Izz

Such dropping will wear away the hardest stone.

Marion

(To Jonathan.)
You need not squeeze so tight.

Rett.

(Sitting beside James.)
I'll not kiss you.

James

Don't you like kissing?

Retty

Not with you.

Jonathan

'Tis Mr. Clare she saves them for.

Retty

'Tis not true.

Izz

Shame on you!

Jonathan

Ho, ho!

(Sings.)
I never loved but one fair maid,
And she did prove untrue,
Untrue to him, who to her paid,
More love than was her due.
Her wandering heart and faithless eyes,
Made many a shepherd weep,
Whilst all of them fought for the prize
Which none of them could keep.
Which none of them could keep.

(The girls sigh. There is a silence, the men smoke, TESS, unnoticed, walks along the portico of the farmhouse.)

Jonathan

(Sings.)
Merrily danced the barber's wife
Safly sat his sister,
Nobody came so she blushed with shame,
Nobody came and kissed her.

All.

(Joining in the chorous.)
Nobody came, nobody came,
Nobody came and kissed her.

Jonathan.

(Sings.)
The night grew dark,
And her love arrived,
He danced with the barber's sister,
And all was well so you can tell
That somebody came and kissed her.

Retty.

(Rising.)
Well kissing goes by choosing.

Jonathan.
Did I tell you what happened to Jack Dollum at Farmer Tott's?

Retty.
Jack Dollup he as rotten as touchwood.

Jonathan.

You know Jack Dollup has been courting the Widow Blake's daughter.

All

Yes, yes.

Jonathan.

Well it's all come out that's he's deceived her as he deceived many before. But this time he had a different woman to deal with - her mother. Yesterday he saw her coming up to the door with a great brass mouthed umbrella in her hands as would have felled an ox. "Do Jack Dollup live here?" she cried / "I want him." I have a bone to pick with he, I can assure'n. And right behind her comes the girl, her handkerchief to her eyes, weeping like a watering pot. "Oh Laird a me! Here's a time!" cries Jack, looking out of the window. "Where shall I get? Where shall I get!" and with that he jumps into an empty churn.

Marion.

Ha, ha.

Jonathan.

And shuts himself inside just as the window burst in. "I'll claw his face for him! Only let me get at him!"

(They all laugh.)

Well, she hunted everywhere, bullywragging Jack by side and seam, and he laying a ' most stifled in the churn, and the girl crying her eyes out at the door.

(they all laugh.)

It would have touched a marble stone, ha, ha.

All.

Go on.

Jonathan.

How the woman had the wit to guess it, I can never tell, but she found he was inside. Without a word she took hold of the winch, and round she swung her, Jack a flopping about inside. "Oh, let me out, I'll be churned to a pummy!" "Not till you make amends," she cries, and pumps the more. "Stop the churn, you witch," screams he. "Oh you call me witch, do ye, when you ought to be calling me mother-in-law this long time." On went the churn. "I'll make amends," cries he. "I'll marry her," and she lets him out and he skips away and married another one today, a widow who has money.

POSTAGE TWO PENCE IN ADVANCE.

Marion

Oh Lord, Oh Lord!

Izz

Serves her right.

James.

Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Jonathan

Let's walk down the lane. I expect Tim Smith. He's coming to see Crik about a place here.

Marion.

'Tis a good story.

Jonathan.

"I'll be churned to a pummy!"

(They all stroll through the gate and go right, laughing and chatting.) (Tess has buried her face in her arms against the post. She turns.)

Tess.

Have they no hearts? How can they -- how can they laugh at such a thing. If they knew they'd laugh the same at me. They have no pity, they're like all the world. No - not all, he would not laugh. He'd weep, or thrust me from him. God give me the strength to tell him all. He must - be told. He loves me and may forgive me, as I would forgive him anything - everything.

(Sits on the bench at left.)

But if he --

(Abraham creeps up to her.)

Abraham.

Tess.

Tess

Abraham!

Abraham.

I am so glad to see 'ee Tess.

Tess.

Abraham! How came you here?

Abraham.

I be a visiting you. Mother and father too -- they've

gone to the inn for gin. Liza Loo's at home with Paul and little Johnny.

Tess.

Mother and father!

Abraham.

Aye, to see Mr. Clare here, the gentleman. So you're to be a grand lady!

Tess.

Don't talk like that, dear.

Abraham.

Mother says so. But she said that once before with Mr. Alec D'Urberville, and you be working still. Why didn't you marry him, Tess?

Tess.

He did not ask me. Mother is wrong to put such ideas into your head.

Abraham.

Oh, I have ideas of my own too. Be you not going to marry the parson's son?

Tess.

Perhaps yes, and perhaps no.

Abraham.

And be rich and wear silk and golden rings and chains? I be so glad! You'll give us many things, mother says, you'll give her a cow, and mend the roof, and give us a new horse. Oh we need one, poor Prince is so old. We came with him, he was so slow, he limped all the way.

Tess.

Poor Prince, lame? What makes him so?

Abraham.

I think it's having nothing in his stomach so often, and mother says you'll give us lots of everything good to eat.

Tess.

That would be beautiful, Abraham.

Abraham.

Wouldn't it.

Tess

Oh, if I only could! You should have everything you wanted. You, and Liza Loo, and all.

Abraham.

And will 'ee live here?

Tess

I don't know -- I don't know where I shall live.
(Aside.)
I don't know that I shall live at all.

Abraham.

And will you give us another pretty baby to play with?

Tess.

(Starting up.)
Oh don't! don't! Abraham, never speak of that. Promise me -- Promise never to mention baby -- to anyone. It's dead, dear -- gone -- gone. You will forget it, won't you? Won't you?

Abraham.

Yes, if you want me to! It was so pretty. I sometimes lay flowers on its grave.
(Tess walks away, then comes back and puts her arms around him.)

Tess

I sometimes feel that you are all I shall have -- you and Liza.

Abraham.

I tell 'ee we miss you at Marlot.

Tess.

Doyyou dear?

Abraham.

Yes. How soft your cheek is. Oh, see that shooting star! They're all coming out -- one by one. Is it true they all be worlds?

Tess

Yes. They be worlds like this one, filled with sad, happy, suffering women, I suppose.

Abraham

And no men?

Tess

If there were no men there, the women would not sorrow.
(Clare strikes a chord on his harp.)
Or be happy.

Abraham.

Listen Tess, 'Tis like an angel.

Tess

(Aside smiling.)
'Tis my angel.
(Clare plays, "Oh Believe me of all those Endearing Young Charms." Abraham climbs up to the window, the music stops.)

Abraham.

Oh, he saw me.
(The door opens and CLARE comes out. He has some paper, a pad with a pencil attached in his hand.)

Clare.

Hellow, my boy.

Abraham.

Hallo, sir.

Clare.

You like music?

Abraham.

I like yours, sir.

Clare.

Whence comes you?

Abraham.

From Marlot. Be you the one, the parson's son, who is to make Tess a grand lady?

Tess.

Abraham! What did I tell you? 'Tis my brother, Angel.

Clare.

(Taking Abraham's hand.)
I hope to do more than make Tess a grand lady, I hope to

make her a happy one.

Abraham
But still, a lady. Mother says--

Tess
Run away and fetch mother. Abraham!
(Whispers.)
Don't let father drink too much please. Hurry now.

Abraham.
Good bye, sir.
(Runs through the gate and out right.)

Clare.
Good bye. A nice boy! Shall I take him to Brazil?

Tess
I wish you could, but we need him at home.

Clare
We? Now Tess - you told me you would let me know -

Tess
(Changing the subject.)
What is that, Angel, a poem?

Clare.
Far from it.

Tess
I would I could write poems. I would I could express myself as the trees do when the wind makes them whisper, as the river does over the stones. They all say something that they feel. I alone, cannot. You -- you have your music, but I -- I feel, in silence.

Clare.
Why Tess.

Tess
And the trees have eyes. At least they seem to have, eyes that look deep into one's soul at night, and the river says, "Take care! Beware of me! Beware!

Clare.
Why Tess!

Tess.
'Tis only fancy, what is that?

Clare.
'Tis a calculation for Crik. Is it suits him, he's going to put some money in my sheme, in our farm in Brazil. Brazil! Do you know where Brazil is?

Tess
Yes, it's far - far off.

Clare.
Not so far. Only a few weeks, if you will say yes. You promised me an answer. Why do you put me off?

Tess.
You know I love you. Oh, be content. Let me go on just loving you -- loving you. I could do that though half the world should lie between.

Clare.
You strange child! Come now, your answer.

Tess.
Your friends would scorn me. I am not a lady.

Clare.
God made you one the day you saw the light.

Tess
Your mother and your father.

Clare
They have consented. You misjudge. My father is a thoroughly disinterested man, thoroughly kind. You can judge by this. The other day, when he was away somewhere, he encountered there a wild young man of rank. A Mr. Alec something or other.

Tess

(Aside.)
Alec!

Clare
My father, feeling it was his duty, expostulated with him about his ways, and was bitterly insulted. Instead of being angry, my father forgave him and went to him again,

and thinks he will be benifitted by his words. You see he's very good, if a little narrow. The consent of your mother and father is all we need now. They've come here to give it, have they not?

Tess

What they say would not count against my heart and conscience Angel, I will say something to you I never said to anyone before, something I never admitted to myself. Did you ever love anyone you could not respect?

Clare.

Never. I could not.

Tess

Oh! I -- I love my mother and my father, but try as I will, I cannot thoroughly repsect them, though they may be good and do the best they can. That troubles me, makes me think perhaps - can you understand?

Clare

In that relationship, yes. I thought you meant differently.

Tess

Could you love a woman you did not respect?

Clare

No -- I could not -- because -- I love you -- I need think of no other. Ah Tess, you are tantalizing. I sometimes think you are the greatest coquette in the world.

Tess

I a coquette?

Clare

Or -- that you love someone else.

Tess

You know it is not so! Does not every word I say, every look I give you, every tone in my voice cry "Angel, I love you?"

Clare

Then why not answer "yes." You are happy?

Tess

When I am with you.

Clare

Then be with me, always. Answer...

Tess

You know nothing of me -- I am not--

Clare

Nonsense -- you worry about my family -- because you were born ~~different~~ in a different --

Tess

I be better born than you sir, and I know you scorn old families. Yes, Angel, I am not plain Tess Durbeyfield, I am Tess of the D'Ubervilles, one of the noblest and oldest families in all England. My father is a baronet by every right. Parson Trigham has traced us back -- back to the deluge somewhere. I can't but be proud of it, though we be but peasants in our way of living. You would not marry such a pedigree as I?

Clare

Ha, ha. Why there's many a mushroom millionaire would pay his gold for such. That needn't trouble you. Your answer.

Tess.

Wait -- you know nothing of me, save what you see. I must-- tell you -- first of -- my life.

Clare

That's what you always say. Well, go on, go on.

Tess

I--I--

(Aside)

I -- I-- I can't tell him now. I--

Clare

Tell me about your home.

Tess

There is a hut at Marlot, smaller than that. There are three rooms in it, a kitchen with an earthen floor, my mother's bedroom, and a loft where all the children sleep. My mother was a milkmaid like myself. She can hardly read.

Her Monday's work is done by Saturday, and sometimes 'tis not done. We have a horse, a cart, that's all. The horse is old and lame. He is the only one that works. He keeps the family. The money that he earns my father spends in drink. But they are fond of me. They sent me to a school where I learned -- words -- no more. I grew up like a weed with no one's hand to guide me -- no knowledge of the world, no warning, no advice. They sent me out to service to a family of our name, a younger branch of the D'Urbervilles, where I -- I - Oh no, no, don't ask me to go on. Why did you choose me from all the rest?

(IZZ MARION and RETTY enter from round the farmhouse.)

Look! There they stand, Izz, Marion and Retty. Why didn't you love one of them? They be prettier, better, and more worthy than I. Why didn't you love one of them instead of me? They loved you. Yes, as much as I --- no, not as much as I, but they love you. I know it. Go to them -- ask them. Any one of them will make you a good wife.

Clare

Nonsense. I love you and I'm going to marry you.

Tess

I must tell you something first. I can't now -- I must think it over. I must find words.

Clare.

All right, dear. Tell me when I come back. I'll take these into Crick, now don't be fanciful.

(Tears sheet of the pad, leaves it on the bench, kisses her and turns. The girls run out L.)

Clare

(Laughing.)

You see I've frightened them. Child, I only want you, and your answer. Tell me anything you wish.

(Goes into the farmhouse.)

Tess

I must--I must. There's no more putting it off, when he comes back I must tell him.

(She walks up and down. JONATHAN and JAMES come in from the gate at right, followed by TIM and another man.)

Jonathan

Wait, Tim, Crick's pretty busy o'nights, now calculating. We'll see if he's busy now.

(Jonathan and James go to farmhouse.)

Tim.

(Recognizing Tess as she turns.)
Hullo, my lady! Remember me at Mr. Alec D'Urbervilles?
(Tess shrinks from him.)
You left rather sudden -- (Laughs.)

Tess

Don't.

Tim.

Come -- come -- that's not the way to treat an old friend. We'll get on finely, I'm coming here to work. I say - a kiss now.
(Tess struggles with him. CLARE enters from the farmhouse.)

Clare

Stop!

Tim

(With an insolent glance.)
Oh so you're the one now are you?
(Clare knocks him down.) Tess clings to Clare.)

Tess

Go-- go into the house. Angel -- I beg of you.
(She gets between him and the man. The man gets up sullenly.)

Clare

There is the gate.
(The men go it.)
(Tim turns.)

Other man.

Made a mistake?

Tim.

No, but I spare the gent's feelings.
(Clare starts towards him -- Tess clings to Clare)

Tess

Angel! Angel! Don't follow them.
(He gently puts her aside and sternly follows the men out of the gate.)

Tess

(Wildly.)
Oh what shall I do! If he should learn the truth from the m--
from them before I can tell him.
(Izz, Marion, and Retty come from round farmhouse at right. They rush at Tess.)

Marion

(Like an accuser.)
You be going to marry him?

Tess

(Laughing wildly.)
Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Retty.
I want to hate 'ee but I can't.

Tess.
(Turning on them savagely.)
Don't! Don't! Don't! Go! Go! Oh why couldn't one of you make him love you? Why didn't you try? I tried to make him go to you. 'twould be far better for us all. You--you are good and true -- while I--oh what am I saying?

Sir John.
(Who has entered from the gate, staggering.)
Hush, not a word.

Tess.
Go, please go.
(The girls retire to the house wonderingly.)

Sir John.
I am come to congratulate you, I am---
(Tries to kiss her grandly. CLARE enters from the gate. He springs forward and lays a hand on Sir, John's shoulder to drag him away. He meets Tess's eyes. The girls, grasping the situation, motion back Jonathan and James at the door.) All go in.)
Clare, Sir John and Tess stand there, looking at each other.)
I be the--

Tess.
My father..

THIS TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE

Sir John

I be King Norman's--

(Staggers and almost falls. Tess catches him.)

Tess

(Cross him to Clare.)

Go-- I cannot bear it.

(Clare turns and goes into his house.)

Tess

(Gently.) Father, how could you!

Sir John.

I want to greet you. I drank the noble --

(ABRAHAM and JOAN enter through the gate and come to them.)

Tess

(Heartbrokenly.)

Mother!

Joan.

Abraham! Take your father down the road. 'Tis cooler there.

(Abraham leads Sir John out of the gate to R.)

Tess

Mother, why did you let him?

Joan.

(Who has been drinking.)

Fiddle-dee-dee! Many's the time you've seen him that way and laughed. All gentlemen drink.

Tess

Mr. Clare saw him.

Joan.

Oh, well, 'tis natur! So you be going to marry him?

Tess

I don't know yet mother, if I can.

Joan

Don't know? Be you a fool? We've come all the way to give our blessings. Don't know! Don't he want to? You're not going to let the chance slip as you did the other one?

Tess

It is because of that other one that this may never be. Oh mother, why did you send me there to claim relationship? Into the world without one word of warning. What could I know? What could I know of men? I was a child -- as blind as innocent---Oh mother, have pity on me--I am suffering so.

Joan

But that's all gone--now 'tis different, Tess. How can that change this one?

Tess

He does not know of that.

Joan

'He won't tell? The Lord a lord, that I should have such a fool for a child. 'Tis past and forgotten.

Tess

No, no.

Joan

(Violently.)
Don't 'ee understand how we need money? Don't 'ee understand we don't have food enough? The roof drips on us. The horse is old, he can't last long, and Liza's sick.

Tess

I'll work my fingers to the bone for you, for them, but I will not deceive him.

Joan.

(Imploringly.)
No, no Tess, you must not tell him.

Tess

I love him, therefore I cannot deceive him.

Joan

But he'll not marry 'ee if he knows.

Tess

Then he will not marry me. I'll not wed a man I love with a lie on my lips, a lie in my heart.

Joan.

But the child be dead.

Tess

Yes. But the past, mother--always lives - always. It is the one thing we cannot get away from.

Joan.

You must not tell - you must not.

Tess

I shall tell him tonight. If he forgives, mother, you shall have all you want. I should have told him long ago, at first. Oh, how can I go to him and--

(She sinks on the bench - her eyes fall on the pad.)

I'll write it to him -- when I shan't see his face.

Joan

No 'ee shant.

Tess

Yes, mother, give me that please. It would be easier than telling him.

Joan

Oh you ~~xexix~~ be no child of mine.

Tess

Don't say that.

(Joan goes up to the gate in a rage.)

No, I can't--I won't lie even for them.

(She stands there, then goes to the window, taps and opens it.)

Angel, I will leave something on the sill here for you. Take it, and then, if you still love me, come to me without a word.

(She closes the window and crosses. Joan unseen watches this.)

Tess

(Writes.)

Angel: This--this is what I have to tell. When I went out to service, I--I was deceived -- I did not know-- the child died--

(ALEC D'URBERVILLE has entered L.I.)

Alec.

(Standing by her.)

Well?

Tess
(Starting to her feet.)
Alec!

Alec.
Yes, Alec.

Tess
What have you come for?

Alec
You.

Tess
Plesse go.

Alec
Oh no, my Tess, I can't live comfortably without you, I've tried and still returned to you. I've found you - I love you.
(Tess laughs bitterly.)
What are you doing, my pretty Tess?

Tess
Writing my history of shame. Do you need to read it?

Alec.
That is written above -- with my name as author. Come now - your mother couldn't trick me-- I followed her here to you. Come with me again, and you shall have everything. I'm richer than ever - and much handsomer. Look at me.
(Turns her round.)
And they are poorer. Oh I know. I've seen that they haven't enough to eat sometimes. I've been there often to find you. They wouldn't tell me where you were, but I found you just the same. You ought to feel flattered. You are the only one -- the only woman I ever cared for, the only one who suited me. Think of the benefit to them, and yourself, and me. Will you come back?
(Claro strikes a chord with his harp.)

Tess
No.

Alec.
Think.

Tess
I never wish to see you again. I loathe you.

(Laughing.) those Alec
All women say ~~sssx~~ things.

Tess.
Does it not strike you that what all women say, some may mean

Alec.
You'll come to me some day, you'll have to. It's Fate. I'll
I'll wait.
(He strolls out left. Tess sinks down and covers her face with her hands, then madly finishes the note.)

Tess
(Writing.) "The child died. Forgive me. I should have told you long ago. I dared not. But I love you, Tess."
(She runs to the window, lays the note on the sill, takes a rose from her breast, kisses it, lays it beside the note, knocks on the window and rushes across. Joan's arm is seen round the corner of the house.)
She quickly snatches the note. The window is raised Clare's hand is seen, he takes the rose. The window is closed. There is a silence. Tess stands in agony not daring to look up. The door opens and Clare comes out. The light streams from behind him on to Tess. He opens his arms.)

Clare.

Tess.
(Tess turns, and with a wild cry of joy rushes into his arms. Joan hastily goes out of the gate at R.)

-:- C U R T A I N -:-

-:- "TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES"-:-

-:- ACT II -:-

-:- A C T II -:-

S c e n e: A room in an old manor house that once belonged to the D'Ubervilles. There is a window R. C. a door to the left of that. A door at L. a wide fireplace with burning logs at R. A couch near it, against the couch a table. A larger table in the L. H. Upper corner, is laid for refreshments. The whole scene is solemn and impressive looking. It is late in the afternoon. The door at back opens and Retty runs in.)

Retty

(Wildly.)

I can't bear it! I can't bear it.

(She throws herself face down on the couch.)

They must be married by now.

(Looks at the clock.)

It be all - all over. Tess is his wife. He looked so happy and she looked so happy. Oh dear! And the parson said "You take this woman for your wife." I hope they didn't notice that I run away. I had to. I be a fool! Come now, they be married, it's all over -- and -- and there's other men -- lots -- no there isn't -- not for me -- But he'll be here. He mustn't see me cry. They'll all be here. Now laugh!

(She walks up and down, trying to laugh, and comes face to face with Izz who has entered at L.)

Both.

You!

(They fall into each other's arms.)

Izz

I had to run away --, I could no bear it - I cried so.

Retty.

(Patting her on the back.)

Poor Izz.

Izz.

(Patting her on the back.)

Poor Retty.

Retty.

We be fools.

Izz

Yes. Now 'tis over. 'Tis over, and we have our lives to lead.

Retty.

Alas, yes.

Izz

I shall marry as soon as I can.

Retty.

Marry! I don't ever want to marry.

Izz.

You must. They say one makes you forget another.

Retty

I never can. Why Jonathan wants me and --

Izz

Take him. He's not a gentleman--

Retty

And can't play the harp.

Izz

He's a good man.

Retty

All the goodness in the world wouldn't makes amends -

Izz

Come now -- they'll all be here soon. Let's watch for them.
(Goes to the window.)
How beautiful Tess did look.

Retty

I can't hate her. He did right.

Izz.

And he'll be so happy in Brazil.

Retty

It was strange that none of his family came to the wedding.

Izz

Her family did, and 'tween you and me, 'twas stranger. If I had a drunken baronet for a father -- well all his grand name and titles wouldn't let him in, I assure ye.

Retty

I heard the door.

(They run to the window. The door at back opens and MARION enters. She tosses her hat towards the couch, goes to the table wildly and grasps decanter. Her hand trembles so it knocks against the glass.) The girls turn.)

Both.

Marion!

Marion

I don't care! I must have it.

(Drinks.)

You feel it as much as I do. You couldn't stay in the church any more than I could. Take some -- 'it will be the only consolaion we'll get.

Retty

No, no.

Izz

'Tis false consolation.

Marion

What else can you do?

Izz and Retty

We be going to get married.

Marion

That be false consolation too. To whom?

Retty

Jonathan.

Izz

An one.

Marion

You'll be right. I'll join you. Let's drink to it, and

then we'll go a man hunting.

Retty

Didn't Tess look beautiful?

Izz

Her gown must have cost two pounds.

Marion

(Bitterly.) She did look beautiful. I trust she'll act so.

Izz

What do 'ee mean?

Marion

If she ever fooled him, I'll be the first to let him know.

Izz

Shame on you.

Marion

Yes I will. He's too good to be fooled.

Retty

Tess could not do that that.

Marion

All women can. You could, the both of you. I could. I only wish I had the chance.

Retty

Don't take any more.

(They try to stop her.)

Marion

I will.

(Voices outside. They put their hands to their hearts and listen. Izz and Retty run to the window. Marion, with a defiant toss of her head, drains her glass and sets it down with a bang. SIR JOHN? JOAN? ABRAHAM and LIZA LOO, in their best, enter at C.)

Joan.

(With great satisfaction.) Well, 'tis done. And what's done can't be undone, I says.

Marion

Would 'ee have it so?

Joan

(Airly.) Oh, I be content.

Marion

Oh you be mighty grand now! Your daughter is a lady, Joan Durbeyfield.

Sir John.

D'Uberville -- tis D'Uberville.

Marion

(With a curtsey.)
I aks your pardon, Lady D'Uberville.

Sir John.

Tess was always a lady --- a born one, of ancient family. I have a family vault at Kingsbere.

Marion

(With a curtsey.) Aye Sir John.
(The children examine the things on the table.)

Joan.

(Seating herself with great satisfaction on the couch.)
'Tis but due that Tess should marry a gentleman.

Marion.

(With a curtsey.)
Aye, my lady of the ancient family. My Lady D'Ubervilles carriage blocks the way.

Joan

You are envious.

Marion

Not I.

Joan.

I seed you run away from the church and cry, all of you.

Marion

Fiddle-de-dee

Retty.

'Tis not true.

Izz

We came to see that -- that all was in readiness.

Sir John.

Wine! He understands what is due to such as I . In King Norman's time, my ancestors, them as lays in leaden coffins, weighing tons and tons, in coats of mail and jewels, we drank from goblets of gold.

Marion.

He! he!

Sir John.

What did you say?

Marion

(With a curtsey.) Aye, Sir John.

Sir John.

This very house be part of one of the old manor palaces of the family, the most ancient family in Wessex.

Marion

Oh, 'tis grand.

Sir John.

'Tis but a farm dwelling now.

Izz, Marion and Retty.

(Curtseying.) Aye, Sir John, Ha, ha, ha.

Joan.

Minx's! You be mad with jealousy. You wanted him for yourselves.

Marion

Oh fiddle-de-dee!

Retty

It is not true, for I am to marry.--

Izz

Yes, yes, and I.

Izz.

Yes,yes, and I.

Joan

Who?

Sir John

And bears, and serpents, as long as -- as this table - Boy constructors. I drink to my ancestors, to Tess, and the island.

Abraham.

(Examing the food.)

And the bears.

Liza.

And serpents.

Marion

As you can't get your antiquirees to dig up your bones, you better eat, to cover 'em up, instead o' drinking.

Joan.

What do you mean?

Marion

Your family don't look over fat, my Lady Durbeyfield.

Joan

Oh, we always have as much as we can swallow.

Marion

A mighty small swallow for so ancient a family. The boy looks starved.

Abraham.

I be. May I eat mother?

Joan

No, no, I tell 'ee. Wait till Tess --- Mrs. Clare comes. 'Tis company manners to wait.

Abraham.

Oh, it's always company manners to do what ye don't want.

Sir John.

To King Norman.

Retty

(At window.) Here they be.

Izz

Let's go and welcome them. Marion -- Marion.

Marion

I'll not go.

(Exs. Betty and the children run out back. Marion hesitates and then rushes after them.)

Joan.

Sir John, drink to me, for 'tis I brought it all about. I'll join 'ee.

Sir John.

The likes o' them can't understand our ancient family feeling. Joan, my Joan, here's to you!

Joan

You little know. I had two strings to my bow, sir. mr. Mr. Alec D'Uberville's the other. Should this have failed- well he'd have come forward. I tell 'ee he wants her and he's rich.

Sir John.

To marry Tess?

Joan.

No, no, 'tis oo late for that.

Sir John.

I tell 'ee I won't have it, I-I--

Joan.

'Tis best as it is. A right handed marriage to a man as has some money, be far better and more lasting than a left handed one with a man as has xxxx more. And 'tis I, Joan--- not ancient family sir that did it. And we'll have many fine things, I tell 'ee, and you can live like a gnelteman. But leave the management o' things to me. A woman's wit is wirth more than a man's family. I'll tell 'ee something, but you must keep it close.

Sir John.

Aye, aye.

Joan.

Mr. Clare knows nothing of the other and thechild.

Sir John

'Tis well in such a family. She did not tell?

Joan.

She did far worse -- she wrote it. Words on paper last the longest. I burned the note. It all went up in smoke, out of the chimney at Marlot.

Sir John.

Here's to ye.

TESS enters at C. with a child on each side of her. The three girls follow.)

Tess.

Yes, yes, and more too, Liza. Mother!

(Goes to her.)

Joan.

Dearie, I be so proud. You looks beautiful.

Tess

Mother, I feel beautiful.

(The girls sigh.)

Abraham.

Tess, I be hungry.

Liza.

So be I.

Tess

Well eat then.

Abraham.

Mother made us wait.

Tess

Oh mother.

Joan

'Twas but right. Folks should learn early to keep down their feelings, and the ways o' company. You may eat now.

Tess

But all there is.

Abraham.

(At the table.) We never can do that, Tess. There's plenty here for weeks and weeks. Tess, may I take home some cake so litle, Johnny?

Liza.

And I for Paul?

Tess

Fill all your pockets -- full.

(The children eat greedily. Sir John, sitting at the right at table, still drinks. Joan joins and sits next him at the foot of the table.)

Izz, Marion, Retty, won't Tess you eat?

Retty

I cannot eat.

Izz

Nor I, dear Tess.

Tess

Then come and sit by me, all of you, close.

(They sit on the couch. Marion stands apart.)

Marion, there is room for you, sit here.

(Marion hesitates, then sits at her left.)

Give me your hand. Draw close. I want you near me, you three, who worked so often at my side. You won't forget me?

Izz and Retty

Never, dear Tess.

Marion

(In a hard voice.)

I hope you will be happy.

Tess

I am happy.

Marion

(After a struggle with herself.)

I mean -- I wish you joy.

Tess

Thanks.

Retty

(Aside.) Poor Marion.

Izz

How do you feel?

Retty.

Tell us.

Tess

I do not know. I never felt this way before. I can't find words to tell you. You will miss me?

All

Ah, we shall.

Tess

And you're not angry that I took him? I had to.

Retty

We be glad.

Izz

Oh, 'tis far better so.

(Clare enters at Centre. The girls start up and withdraw up R. Tess turns and faces Clare. He comes and kisses her. The girls sigh.)

Clare

My little wife.

Tess

Yes.

Sir John.

And it all went up in smoke, ha, ha.

Joan.

(Pinching him.) Hold your tongue, I tell 'ee.

John.

Ha, ha.

Clare

Your father is merry, Tess.

Joan

(Hastily rising.)

Why should he not be? So be I, and you.

Sir John.

Ha, ha, all in smoke.

Joan

He has drunk too, often to his family, to the bride, and

you, sir.
(To Sir John.)
Hold your tongue.

Sir John.
(Half singing and banging the table.)
Up the chimney at Marlot.

Joan.
Oh -- oh -- we must be going. We have a ways to go. It be late. Hush John. Good bye, my Tess, good luck to you.

Tess
(Embracing her.)
Mother!

Joan.
(Patting her on the back.)
There -- there. Mr. Clare, take good care o' her.

Clare
I will.

Tess
Good bye, father.

Sir John.
I be more proud of my family than ever.

Joan.
Come children.

(Joan leads Sir John to the door, fearful lest he may say more. The children run to Tess, she kneels between them and kisses them.)

Abraham.
Good bye, Tess. Oh must 'ee go?

Tess.
(Embracing him.) Yes dear.

Liza.
(Feeling her gown.)
Is that silk, real silk?

Tess
(Nods.) And you shall have one like it.

Joan.
Come children.

Lisa and Abraham.

(Running to the door.)
Good bye, Good bye.
(Abraham runs back to Clare.)

Abraham.

Don't let the bears eat Tess.
(Runs out with his fists in his eyes.)

Liza.

(At the door.)
Nor the serpents bite her.
(They go out at back. Clare takes Tess in his arms, the girls sigh audibly and hold on to each other.)

Tess

(Whispers.) Angel: Go to them. Kiss them. Poor things, I have robbed them. Go kiss them.

Clare.

Well girls, have you kissed the bride?

All.

Yes, Mr. Clare.

Clare.

'Tis but fair you should kiss me. Will you?
(They do not answer.)
Come Betty, you're first. Come, I won't bite you.
(Betty comes slowly forward and presents her cheek. He kisses it and turns to Tess.)

Marion.

(Aside.)
Drat the drink! I did not dare to let him kiss my mouth.
(They all stand there a second in slight embarassment.)

Betty

Well we--

Marion

(Taking the lead.)
Yes, we must go.

All.

Good bye, and good luck to you.

Tess and Clare

Good bye. Good bye.

(They follow them to the door, it closes. They stand and look at each other.)

Clare

At last I can feast my eyes on you. Are you happy?

Tess

That's no word for it.

(Clare puts his arm around her and they come down to the couch.)

Clare

And you're sure you're not frightened dear at the prospect of going so far into a new country.

Tess

How can I fear when I shall be with you?

Clare

But all will be so different. We shall see no one that we know.

Tess

I shall see you. You won't be forced to leave me often, will you? I too can work in the fields, you know.

Clare.

It's very hot there.

Tess

Will you fetch your harp along Angel? To play on in the cool of the evenings as you used?

Clare

No, but we shall have a guitar and you shall learn to play on it.

Tess

I have no cleverness. I can only play upon the strings of my own heart.

Clare

And mine.

Tess.

Angel?

Clare

Yes.

Tess

(Smiling.)
You won't let the bears eat me.

Clare

No, nor hug you.

Tess

Nor the serpents bite me.

Clare

They may be tempted, but you won't.
(They are holding hands. There is a knock atnthe door at R.)

Clare

Come in.
JONATHAN enters C. hat in hand.)

Jonathan.

Just come to wish you luck, Mr. Clare, and Miss Ma'am - Ishould say -- to call her by her lawful --

Clare

Thank you Jonathan.

Tess

Thank you.

Jon.

And your luggae is in the hall.

Clare

Drink this cup of ale, and keep that for your trouble.

Jon.

Succes in foreign parts -- er -- that's all.

Tess and Claire.

Good bye, Jonathan.
(He goes out back. They sit again.)

Clare

I hope you didn't mind my family not coming dear. I did not ask them. I thought it best that ---

Tess

I understand. How good you are. You wish to wait till I'm presentable. Oh yes -- and I shall be. I'll read and

read -- all those books you've told me of, and learn at your side, everything.

(She lays her head against his shoulder. A knock at the door l.)

Clare

What the deuce! Can't they leave us alone! Come in!

(Man enters with a package.)

Man.

A package sir, for Mrs/ Clare.

Tess.

For me?

Clare

Thank you. 'Tis father's writing.

(The man goes out at L.)

Clare.

Thank Heaven!

Tess

(Laughing.) Do you know Angel, I never felt like saying "Thank Heaven" when anyone left a room till now.

Clare

Father's writing. It's a present for you.

Tess

Oh open it. I never had a present before, save the bible mother gave me.

(CLARE unties the package and drops the paper. Tess picks it up.)

Tess

(Reading.) Mrs. Angel Clare. Angel! That's me, Mrs. Angel Clare.

Clare

Don't you believe it?

Tess

I'll try.

(Draws close to him.)

What is it?

Clare.

(Glancing over the letter.)

I remember. My godmother left them in charge of my father.

They're for you. Dear woman, she expected wonders of me. She left them to be given to my wife.

(Opens the box.)

Tess

Oh how beautiful. For me? Angel I can never wear these. I shall just look and look at them.

Angel.

Dear old lady:

(Reads.)

My dear Angel: I leave these to you or your wife. They have been in the family many years, and it is but right that you should have them. Give them to your wife on her wedding day. I know the woman that you choose will be good and pure and true. Your godmother, Gertured."

(Hands them to her.)

On our wedding day. Now put them on. I'll help you.

(Tess stands there smiling. He puts a bracelet on her arm, a star in her hair, and tries the necklace over her gown.)

That's not right. Can't you make it look more like an evening gown? Tuck it away a bit at the ~~xxxx~~ neck. It should be lower. I'll help you. There.

Tess

I can't clasp it.

Clare

(Stepping back.)

How beautiful you are. If you were to appear in a ball room --- and yet you're not a whit more so than when you wore a cotton gown with a rose at your breast. Look! I have it here.

(He takes a rose from case in his pocket.)

The only token you ever gave me. The one you left on the sill. Your explanation of yourself - a wildflower. You remember?

(Tess stands there, holding the necklace on with both hands.)

Tess

(Smiling tenderly.) The one I gave you with the letter.

(The necklace falls at her

feet with a crash. She looks straight ahead and her lips move. He stoops to pick ~~it~~ up the necklace at her feet.)

Tess

Hedoes not know -- he does not know.

(Clare kneeling at her feet catches sight of her face.)

Clare

Tess, what is it?

Tess

The letter.

Clare

What letter?

Tess

On the sill. The night I told you - The night you came to me. Oh!

(Wildly.)

You must have got it. You must have got it. I laid it there, telling you all -- all.

(She sinks down on the couch and covers her face her hands.)

Clare

Tess, my sweet, what troubles you? What was in that letter?

Tess

My life.

Clare

How strange you are! I remember -- you said you had something to tell, but you told me ~~xxxx~~ of your home. The wind must have blowin it away - a trifle.

Tess

There was no wind.

Clare

Never mind!

Tess

It - was - no - trifle.

Clare

But do you remember what we said this morning --

Tess

I remember.

Clare

About telling each other our faults -

Tess

I remember.

Clare

We spoke lightly -- but it was no light promise on my side. I -- I have something to say. I know I am a peculiar man - I want to make a confession.

Tess

(With relief) You have something to confess?

Clare

Yes. I wonder if you will forgive me.

Tess

It is forgive already.

Clare

You don't know. You value me at far more than my worth. Draw close -- because -- I want you to forgive me. Of course men don't always tell things like this, but I shall feel more honest if I do. It is because you are what you are - so pure, that I must. I am not religious - I suppose because I grew up in a religious family, yet though I am not spotless myself, I admire that most in others, for I fell.

(Tess starts.)

I went to London, young, unsettled, full of life. I met a woman. I plunged into a short and sensual dissipation with her.

(Tess starts to her feet.)

And then I ended it -- never to repeat it. I felt to be honest and I must tell you this. Do you forgive me?

Tess

I am so glad!

Clare

glad!

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Tess.
Yes - because then you can forgive me.

Clare
Forgive you?

Tess
I told you all in that letter. I knew it was right that you should know. Give me your hand. I would you had read that note - it is so hard to tell. It was three years ago. We were told that we were noble D'Ubervilles - my father's head was turned. I was told that I could marry a gentleman. I must, they said, and I was sent away. I told you - to service, to the other D'Urbervilles. They thought I should be recognized. There was a son. They thought that he would marry me. We often met, and he was very kind at first. He followed me, would not let me alone. I did not know - I was so young -- I did not understand -- until it was -- too late.

Clare
(Starting up.) No -no.

Tess
(Lost in her past.) Then I went home again. They met me at the door, my mother and my father. "And be you married yet?" They cried. I did not answer. I went up stairs into the loft where I had slept -- I did not leave it till - the child was born.

(Clare walks to the mantel and leans his forehead against it.)
It was very frail. The vickar heard that I was ill - dying. He came to christen it. My father locked the door, he had to go away. The children sat with me. My child was dying. I took my prayer book from the shelf, I placed a candle at his head - I dipped my fingers in the bowl and made a cross upon its little head. I had to save its soul. I sprinkled water on it. I said: "I baptize thee in the name of the Fater, and the Son." I name thee Sorrow." That sorrow died.

Clare
(Turning.) Tess, are you out of your mind?

Tess
(Quietly.) I am not out of my mind.

Clare

(Crying out.) Oh! Why didn't you tell me! I remember.
(She goes to him. He draws away in horror and does not look at her. She follows on her knees.)

Tess

In the name of our ~~God~~ love forgive me as I have forgiven you.

Clare

Oh Tess. Tess. Forgiveness cannot apply to such a case. You were one person, now you are another. Such forgiveness cannot be. It would be grotesque.

(He laughs horribly.)

Tess

Don't! Don't! It kills me. Have mercy!
(He stills laughs.)
Whatndo you mean by that laugh?

Clare

That is impossible. Does that man live?

Tess

Yes

Clare

No - no - We might meet him.

Tess

We were going to Brasil.

Clare

No - No! Go where we might he would ever come between us.

Tess

Can you not forgive me?

Clare

I do forgive you, but forgiveness is not all.

Tess

I thought you loved me. Having begun to love you, I love you forever, in all disgrace, because you are yourself. I ask no more. How can you, my husband, stop loving me?

Clare

The woman I have been loving is not you. Another in your shape. — a lie.

(Tess sits down like a dead woman.)

Tess

(After a pause.)
I don't belong to you then, ano more, do I?
(He never looks at her.) Angel, am I too wicked for you to go on living with me.

Clare

I can't think yet.

Tess

I shan't ask you to let me. If you go away. I'll try not to follow you. D won't unless you tell me to. I shall not speak to you if you bid me not. I shall not ask you why.

Clare

And if I order you -

Tess

(Proudly.) I shall obey.

Clare

Listen, Tess, I shall go away to Brazil - at once.

Tess

Angel!

Clare

Alone - You -- you may write to me. Here is my address.

Tess

Angel, I--I can't let you go.

Clare.

You must. Oh!
(Recovering himself.)
You must not follow me.

Tess

I promise.

Clare

It is the only way. We must be apart where we can think.

clearly. We will remember the best then - and value, I shall write to my attorney to send you an allowance Here is all the money that I have. Take it.

Tess

I cannot take it.

Clare.

(Gently without looking at her.)

I order you to, Tess.

(She goes toward the table, then draws back.)

No - I have no right.

Clare

Take it.

Tess

Angel, it would be easier for me to take money from the father of my child -- far, far easier from him than from you. I cannot. You are no more the man I loved than I am the woman you loved. I do not know you. You are a stranger.

Clare

Take it Tess.

Tess

I will obey you in all but that.

(Puts the note into his hands.)

The only token you ever gave me.

Clare

How will you live?

Tess

By work, as I always done. That's not a lady's hand. Do you want your ring, Angel?

Clare

No.

Tess

I have no right to it. I am not your wife.

(She puts it on his little finger. He looks away from

her. She takes the star from her hair, the bracelet from hr arm, the necklace from ~~xxx~~ the table and puts them into his hand.)

They belong to your wife.

Clare

(After a second.)

Good bye, Tess.

(She stands there immovable. The door closes behind him. She does not move, but gives a strange, low cry.)

I must obey - I must obey.

-:- C U R T A I N -:-

IN ADVANCE

-:- "TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES"-:-

-:- A C T III-:-

-:- A C T III-:-

Scene: The kitchen in the cottage of Marlot. A low ceilinged room. A door L. of C. to the R. of that rough steps lead up to the left. A fireplace and oven at R. a small paned window at L. A table in the C. two rough chairs and some tubs. There is an old clock, a warming pan, some brass candlesticks and a few plates on shelf. It is early winter outside before snow.

ABRAHAM is sitting on the floor before the fire.

Abraham.

Oh, I be so hungry it be ~~xkxin~~ pain.
(Calls.)
Mother! Mother! I wish Tess would get back. I don't feel so hungry when she's by. The only time I ever had enough to eat was when she married. I've been hungry ever since.
(LIZA enters at back. She has some straw and hay in her hand.)

Liza.

I did not dare take more or Prince would have no supper. There's only a little left. Do you think you can get it down?

Abraham.

I must eat something. It keeps poor Prince alive.
(He chews some.)

Liza.

Do you like it?

Abraham.

No.

Liza.

What does it taste like?

Abraham.

Little sticks. Try some.

Liza.

(Chewing.) I be glad I am not a horse.

Abraham

I be glad I'm not Prince. He be so old.

Liza

Older than you?

Abraham.

No, but older as a horse. I feels as if I was a hundred.

Liza

That's'cause you're ill. I wish we had some o' that cake we had at Tess's wedding.

Abraham.

It do make me hungrier to think of it. Where be mother?

Liza

Walking up and down the road watching for Tess. I hope she do get that place. 'Tis time she were back.

Abraham.

'Tis a long way and Tess be ill. She would not take poor Prince but walked. If father were alive, all would be well.

Liza

Oh what did father do, but talk of the antiquities and his ancient family. Be you going to drink when you grow up?

Abraham.

All gentlemen do. Mother says so. And I be one. I be a baronet. Sir Abraham now, Tess says so.

Liza

When I get anhusband, I tell 'ee, I won't let him go to the Brazils wi'out me.

Abraham.

And mother said we would be rich and have a cow.

And cake -

Abraham.
And everything, and Tess be working still.

Liza
Or trying to. He's never written her. I hear her cry in the night. We never sent a word or money, and 'tis months and months since she came home. He must be a bad man.

Abraham.
No he's not -- Tess says so. He's not like Parson Alec who comes here so often.

done Liza
Then Tess must have something wicked, or Mr. Clare wouldn't act so.

Abraham.
Tess! Shame on 'ee. Hold your tongue.

Liza
I won't.

Abraham.
You shan't speak o' Tess so. Go away.

Liza
Oh - oh - sick bot -- sick boy.
(Joan enters at back.)

Joan.
Hush yer noise.

Abraham
Mother, has Tess come yet?

Joan
No. What be that?

Abraham.
I be trying to eat it.

Joan
Lord a' Lord. Be you a fool ? Poor boy, don't 'ee fret, 'Twill come out right when Tess gets back, for if she does not get that place, I have another plan, mark 'ee. Don't 'ee worry.

Abraham.
My stomach does.

Liza
Is it another husband for Tess mother?

Joan.
No, but just as good. Wait, I tell 'ee.

Abraham.
Mother, I be a baronet. Could I not sell the title? I would for a loaf of bread.

Joan.
Peace, I tell 'ee.

Abraham.
I cannot see what good a Sir before your name does. It did no good to father.

Joan.
Try to be as good as he was. He was a fine speciman, a gentleman, and a schollard, too, in, his way. Have patience. 'Twill come out right in the washing. I'll make it so.

Abraham.
(Aside.) Oh I be so sick.
(Enter TIM and the SHERIFF. They stand in the doorway.)

Sherriff.
Well, Mrs. Durbeyfield, what am I to do?

Joan.
The sheriffs!

Sher.
Well!

Joan
Oh wait sir, wait.

Sher.
Sorry, Mrs. Durbeyfield, I have my orders. If you can't pay the rent, you must go out at once.

Joan
Oh Lord a' Lord, Can't'ee wait a second? I do expect my daughter back. If she gets the situation she's gone after we can pay you. My daughter Tess it is.

Tim.
Oh ho, Tess of the D'Ubervilles is it? I have a bone to

pick with that lady. She lost me a good place last year at Farmer Crick's with her airs and fine gentlemen. Tess of the D'Ubervilles! I know her!

Joan.

You shall not speak so. My daughter be a decent married woman.

Tim.

Well, she be lucky.

Abraham.

I be the head o' the house, and I'll not let you talk that way o' Tess.

Tim.

Oh, ho, my lad.

Sher.

Stop Tim. We can wait about a bit if she can settle things. When do you expect her?

Joan

At anymoment, sir.

Sher

We'll stroll about outside a while. Come Tim.
(Tim looks at Joan and laughs. They go out.)

Joan.

Drat them! The rats! Tess o' the D'Ubervilles. It may be Tess o' Alec D'Ubervilles. And then my men, you will toe the mark, I tell 'ee.

Abraham.

Is Mr. Alec coming here again today? I do not like him.

Joan.

Aye, and every day.
(Marion enters at back.)
Marion!
(Marion sits and weeps.)

Joan

What ails 'ee?

Marion

I have lost my place.

Joan

The Lord a' Lord. And Tess be just getting one. How was

it?

Marion
As it has been before. I--I took a drop too much and--

Joan
Shame on 'ee not to know when to stop!

Marion
Do you? Did your late husband?

Joan.
I'll not hear one word against him, I tell you.

Marion
No - no - Mrs Derbey -- Mrs. D'Uberville. He was a fine man and gentleman. Where be Tess?

Joan
She be gone to get another situation. She'll be here soon.

Marion
I have nowhere to go. May I spend he night with you?
(Joan laughs bitterly.)
Well, I'll go then.

Joan
You do not understand. You can stay as long as we do. We may be put out at once, the sheriff's been here. It all depends on Tess. Lord, and she might be rich!

Marion
Has she no word from Mr. Clare?

Joan.
Not one. Devil take such husbands as she gets, I says. And she do write and write, and spend lots of money on postage 'Tis o' the other I'm thinking, Parson D'Uberville.

Marion
A fine parsone he! Tess be brave to have nothing to do with him. I don't like him.

Joan
He be a fine figure of a man, but mighty mean. What's a few pounds to him? He knows we have not food enough to eat, or nothing since Sir John died, and not a penny will he give till he gets Tess. And Tess won't let me ask him. I tell 'ee, he loves her.

Marion

He' ll never get her.

Joan.

Oh he may.

Marion

Never. I wrote to Mr. Clare to warn him. Aye to Brazil -- two months ago -- when I seed Mr. Alec's hanging round. He wunt no good! Parson o' the devil! What made him take to preaching?

Joan

To repent o' his sins, may be. Or because it was something new and different like.

(The door at back opens and Tess enters wearily. She sinks back in a chair.)

Joan.

Well -- what luck?

(Tess shakes her head.)

Did 'ee not get it?

Tess

It was just taken.

Joan

Oh why didn't 'ee hurry? Why didn't 'ee take the horse.

Tess

Poor Prince is ill. He's all we have to depend on. He must be kep alive, mother

Joan

But if you'd gotthere in time.

Tess

It was twelve miles mother. I fainted as I did before. I had to sit by the road a long time.

Marion

Tess you can have my place, I've lost it.

Tess

Oh Marion! Poor Marion!

Marion.

Send the child there -- you might as well have it.

Tess

Thank you Marion. I've tried so hard. I've lost so many places, I'm so weak. If I don't get this place I don't know what will happen -- something terrible! I'm driven to desperation, Marion. I can't struggle much longer. I have no strength left, no will, no hope. Look at the children's faces and think o' the winter coming. Are you sure you've lost the place?

Marion

Yes

Tess

Liza, take the horse and drive to Farmer Tott's at once, and ask him if I can have Marion's place. Tell him how much I need it and sat I'm strong, very strong. I'll be better when I've rested. Hurry, but spare Prince all you can.

Abraham.

Can I go to?

Tess

No, dear, you are too ill, and it will be so much more for Prince to carry?

(JOAN and LIZA go to the door, Abraham follows them out.

Marion

Have you hear from him?

(Tess shakes her head.)

Marion

Since when.

Tess

Not at all / Not since he left me.

Marion

Have you written?

Tess

Many, many times.

Marion

I did not think it o' him. He must ne without heart.

'Tis cruel.

Tess

He is a very good man.

Marion.

Then 'Twas your fault. What did you do? Tess, you must have been a bad wife to him.

(Tess holds up her hands.)

Oh, If I'd but had the chance. I've written too --- to warn him.

Tess

Warn him!

Marion

Of the other.

Tess

Why did you?

Marion

He's always here. I know. To save your soul, I suppose. He means no good, and I know women. You can try them beyond their strength.

Tess

Not me, not me.

Marion

Forgive me, Tess. Tess, can I sleep here to-night? Your mother says I may if you are not put out. The sherriff's been here. I'll go up in the loft and lie down, I need it.

(Comes back and puts her hand on Tess's shoulder.)

I hope you'll get my place.

(Goes up the stairs slowly and turns. Sighs.)

If I had had her chance, how different things would be.

(Tess sits there, looking straight ahead. JOAN enters and lays her hand on Tess's shoulder.)

Joan

Be you tired, Tess?

Tess

Yes, mother, very tired.

Joan

My poor Tess. Don't 'ee frety Tess?

Tess

Mother?

Joan

If you don't get that place, then -- won't 'ee Tess?

Tess

What mother?

Joan.

You know.

Tess

O. no that again.

Joan

You know He's been here and he's coming back. You'll have to, Tess. The sheriff's outside waiting. You'll have to.

Tess

(Shaking her head.) No.

Joan.

Think! We be starving.

Tess

How can you ask me, mother, to be false to the man who honored me and made me his wife? Mother?
(Covers her face with her hands.)

Joan

What has he done for you? Has he not left you? Has he sent you word? Has he answered your letters? Has he sent you money? He has deserted you.

Tess

He has not deserted me. I can get money from his attorne any day if I choose.

Joan

You could get money and you did not!

Tess

I will not take money from him as long as he is silent. I have written and told him how I shall believe. I'll believe he loves me still. I'll believe. I'll believe. I'll believe, and I'll not touch his money, mother.

Oh!

Joan

Tess

I'll work my fingers to the bone first.

Sher.

(In the doorway.)
Well Mrs. Durbeyfield, what am I to do?

Joan.

Just wait a bit. She did not get that place, but she has another chance.

Tim.

(In the doorway.) Oh she be full of chances.

Sheriff.

Sorry, I can't wait. Tim, turn the table over.
(The do so and begin to lay the chairs on it, Joan trying to prevent them. Tim takes hold of the chair in which Tess sits.)

Tim.

Come, my lady, stand up.
(Tess rises but does not move.)
I'm even now.

Tess.

For what?

Tim.

The place you lost me.

Tess

I never harmed you, I did nothing.

Tim.

No, but your man, your fie gentleman did.

Tess

He is my husband.

Tim.

Ho, ho, where is he now. A fine husband, and he knows he's got a fine wife.

Joan.

Tess - Tess - don't 'ee understand what they be doing? They be taking everything away, everthing. Tess, wake up. They be taking the clock, your father gave me, and the baby's chair. Ask them to wait -- to wait.

Tess

(Following the men round.) For the love of Heavn wait -- just a little can't you? Wait till the child gets back! She'll drive fast. If I get that place I can pay you soon. Don't put us out. It is so cold and my brother is so ill. Look at him.

(Abraham is lying on the floor by the fire in a heap.)

And there are others upstairs -- little ones, asleep. Have you no children?

Sher

I'm sorry Ma'am but--

Tim

(On the stairs.) We'd better get the beds down.)

Tess

Oh have pity. Won't you wait? Don't wake them. Wait That's all I ask.

Tim.

No.

(Goes on up.)

Marion.

(Voice from above.) You'll not come up here I tell 'ee. Go back.

(Alec enters C.)

Alec

What's all this?

Sher.

Well Parson -

Alec.

To the devil with Parson. What are you doing here?

Joan

They're putting us out, they're putting us out.

Sher.

Only obeying orders, sir. They can't pay and must go.

Joan.

They won't wait.

Sheriff

I waited all I could.

Alec

Well wait a little longer. Oh I'll pay you for your time, and don't call me Parson unless you want to be kicked. Do you hear?

Sher.

Very well, sir, I'll wait five minutes.

Alec.

Understand, I'm no parson.

Sher.

You don't talk much like one.

Alec.

(Laughing.)
No, damn you. Now take your ugly faces elsewhere.
(The men exit grinning.)

Alec.

(To Joan.)
I'll settle with them. You shan't go.

Joan

Oh thank you, thank you.

Alec.

Leave me with Tess.
(Joan goes out R. Alec approaches Tess.)

Abraham.

(Aside sullenly, half rising.)
I don't like hat man. I hate him.

Alec

Tess --- Tess--- don't you hear me?

Tess.

I hear you.

Alec

You have avoided me - kep away from me. Now you must listen.

Tess

Go on.

Alec
Can't you thank me Tess, for the little favor I just did?

Tess
I thank you.
(She turns away.)

Alec.
Is that all?

Tess
I thank you.

Alec.
Call me Alec.
(She is silent.)
You know why I am here.

Tess
I know why you are always here.

Alec.
Perhaps Tess, you doubt the sincerity of my motive.

Tess
Are you here to save my soul?

Alec.
(Laughing.)
Go on, sneer at me. You never did believe in my sincerity.

Tess
How could I knowing you so well. How could I believe in such a change -- a reprobate become a leader of the church. What mortal thing could bring that change about?

Alec.
It was a man, a simple clergyman whose parting words sank into my soul, a man at whom I had scoffed and scorned. I was weary of the world and women, after you left me. I thought over what he said. I took his advice. I tried it. It succeeded. He showed me a way to work, to be occupied, to do good to others, to be surrounded by the poorunthinking, to hold them in my hand and sway them. It was fine excitement! An exaltation, a dizziness of joy, while it lasted. To move and make the congreation weep and worship me. I seemed to have the spirit. I was sincere. I believed in my sincerity till I met you again.

Tess

Don't say that.

Alec

It's true. You, a good woman did me, a bad man, harm. The day you stood at the door of the barn listening to my sermon you stole my spirit from me. Did you not see how all my fire went out the instant that I saw your face.

Tess

No, no.

Alec.

Yes. I was a natural man again, and I was troubled and I came to you. I came and begged you to pray for me. You only gave a bitter laugh.

Tess

I could not pray for you. I would not. I did not believe, that the great power who made the world would alter in his plans on my account.

Alec.

I came, still believing. I felt of all the persons in the world whom it was my duty and desire to save, you were that one, the woman I had wronged. You looked at me and said, "And have you saved yourself?"

Tess

And had you?

Alec.

I thought so till you came. But you were right. I had not. I found I did not want to. You made me feel that all my fervor was a physical excitement. When I touched your hand I became a man again. And to you, my Tess, I owe my probable damnation.

Tess

No, no.

Alec.

And I'll be ready for it when it comes. But now I have my life to lead, the one I was fitted for. You fled from me, but still I follow you. You are the only woman in the world that ever suited, contented satisfied me. I liked you first. I love you now, you have developed so. I did not despise you, as I did the rest, because you left me. And now

that love has grown and grown till it fills all my life, and there is nothing in life for me but you -- you Nothing for me but you.

Tess

Oh dont -- don't. Go back to your church. Go back to it. Don't say I took you from it, or it from you. I have done harm enough already. Have I not kept from you? Did I not repulse you? Go back and try to have faith again.

Alec.

Never. I've chuked it all for you. I told them so when they came and begged me to rejoin them. You dear damned witch of Babylon, when I see that mouth, a thousand souls are nothing to me, and you are a temptress, say what you will! And my religion is you -- you. Be mine, Tess, as you were.

Tess.

You know what I have answered you before.

Alec.

You need me now, more and more. Give up this useless struggle against fate, against poverty and despair. You shall have evrything a woman can ask for. Answer yes.

Joan.

(Who has been listening, comes forward.)

Do Tess do. He loves you. There's a man for you as will stick by you.

Tess.

(Sternly.) Mother.

Joan.

Think o' me. Think o' me and the children. The boy there be so ill he cannot lift his head. Do it for them and for yourself.

Tess

(Piteously.) I will work for you. Let me work for you.

Joan.

You need not. 'Tis not right. You are not strong now. No matter what place you get you cannot keep it.

Tess

I shall try.

Joan.

He has a claim on you. He's more your husband than the other.

Tess

(In a low tone.) I love the other.

Alec

You still think of that man, that whelp who deserted and despises you? What kind of a ---

Tess

I swore to honor and obey him and I will. I will not doubt him. I will believe he loves me until he tells me not, and I'll wait. I'll wait. I'll wait.

Joan

He'll never come back.

Alec.

(Walking away.) (Aside.)
I'd wring his damned neck if he did.

Joan

He does despise you. Are we to be put out into the cold because you won't take his money or this ones?

Alec.

They shall have all they need. Liza shall go to school and Abraham too.

Abraham.

I don't want to go to school. I want food, food. Mother I'm starving.

Tess

I will wait.

Alec.

Tess, I-- came to tell you something. Be prepared, he'll never come back, he's dead.

Tess

(After a pause.) He's not dead. He's not dead. Something would have told me.

Alec.

He is. I wrote. Today I got my answer from Brazil. He died two months ago of yellow fever at Caracas.
(Tess puts her hand to her head.)

Alec.

Do you want to see the letter?

Tess

(In a strange voice.) I can't believe it -- Angel dead -- i-- can people go out of our lives like that without out knowing it? Can they? Dead!

Alec.

Yes. Now Tess, you will?

(Abraham, gives a sharp cry of pain and starts to his feet and staggers forward and falls near Tess, face down. Tess looks at him, then seems to wake.)

Sher

(At the door.) I can't wait all day.

(Liza pushes herself past him and enters running.)

Liza

Oh Prince be dead, prince be dead.

Tess

(Wearily.) And the place, the place?

Liza.

It be just filled, he said.

Sher.

Tim, take the things.

(Alec stops them witha gesture.)

Alec.

Tess dear?

Tess.

(In he same voice.)
I don't care what happens, Take me.

-:- C U R T A I N -:-

-:- 'TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES'-:-

-:- A C T I V -:-

-:- A C T I V.:-

SCENE I:- A handsome sitting room. A door L. of C., a toilet table with mirror, and a screen to the r. of that. A wide window at L. 3. through which the sun streams. A fireplace L.I a door at R/ of breakfast table R. of C. up stage a couch in front of the fire-place the whole tone of the place is rich and comfortable.

MARION dressed like a parlor maid enters C. with a tray. She sets it on the table softly, listens in the direction of the door at R, then goes to the mantel, takes a calender, and sitting on the couch counts the weeks on it.)

Marion.

Three months. That's four weeks over time, yet I won't believe he's dead. I won't. I think Tess would rather have him so, but if Mr. Clare had got my note and were alive, he'd have come back at any cost, even if he hates her, because he is her husband, and he would not have this. I made my letter plain and strong.

(Recites from memory.)

Honored Sir:- Look to your wife. She is sore put by an enemy in the shape of a friend. There is near her one who should be put aside. A woman should not be tried beyond her strength, and continual dropping will wear away a diamond -- or a stone. A well wisher.' 'Tis plain enough. It reached there two months ago, and yet if-- Oh I am sure Mr Clare is alive. I'd not have believed him dead till I saw

him so.

(There is noise at R. Marion starts, then goes towards the door at R. hastily, as if to knock. It opens and TESS comes out. She wears a beautiful white wrapper.)

Marion.

(Stammering.)
Breakfast, Tess, Mrs. D'Uberville, I should say.

Tess

Call me Tess, Marion. I never forgot how long we worked side by side.

Marion.

Aye and suffered.

Tess

(Sitting at the table.)
It's the only name I have now.

Marion.

I'm not so sure of that, Tess. I don't believe he's dead. Did you see that note from the Brazils? No. I won't believe in it. That man in there lies. Did you ever catch him at it?

Tess

Don't.

Marion.

I'have. I've heard him tell you lots.

Tess

Stop. Can't you see? Can't you see I want to think him dead. I can't believe yet I must. I will. I'd rather far he was, ~~strickn~~ than have him living on, unforgiving. And if he were, then this, all this would kill me.

Marion.

What did you do that he could not forgive?

Tess.

You know, now. It was the past.

Marion.

Then why did you marry him? You had told him?

Tess

I though so.

Marion.

Thought so?

Tess

He did not get the note. I told him after --- or don't. Let me forget.

Marion.

There's lies, and lies somewhere.

Tess

If I were happy in my shame, there might be some excuse for your reproaches. Never speak of him again. Understand? I will not have it. I can't stand it. Every word is a stab You have no right, for whatever I may be, I've been a friend to you, and because I am fallen myself, I have tried to save you from your demon --- drink, and took you with me, from your poverty and misery. Now stop it--stop it I say. I have enough to bear without it.

(Haughtily.)

Pur me some tea.

Marion.

Will he want some?

Tess

No.

Marion.

I -- I love him still, that's why I spoke. Forgive me, Tess.

(ALEC enters C. He is in evening dress and is a trifle drunk. He throws his hat and overcoat on the floor behind the screen.)

Alec.

Oh, you're up? Tea.

(Sits at table.)

Tess

(Pours it out.)

There it is.

Alec.

Cream. Oh it's awful stuff!

(Puts the cup down with a bang. Tess rises and wipes the spilled tea with her napkin.)

Alec.

Oh let it alone, I pay for it.

(To Marion.)

What are you standing staring at?

Tess.

Go Marion.

Alec.

No, wait. Where are the letters? Get them Tess.
(She does so and hands them to him.)
Don't look so damned resigned and patient.

Tess

I have to be.

Alec.

Oh, you're mighty sweet with your calm nerves. You've slept I haven't. Talk! Can't you? What's the matter with her Marion, is she dumb? You've changed since you went up in the world.

Tess.

I don't consider that I have gone up in the world.

Tess

You have enough to eat, and you're growing fat on it, and that family of yours, too.

Tess.

Leave us please, Marion.
(Marion goes out C.)
Whatever ugly thing you have to say, say it only to me.

Alec.

Ugly? To say you've gone up in the world?

Tess

I have ~~been~~ gone down in the world, and you know it. I am infinitely more degraded now, than I was, when I first left you. Be careful, Alec. Be careful what you say or I shall strike you, as I did before. I'm not patient woman that I was when I was hungry. I was patient then, because I had something to be patient for. I have not now. I have nothing but the day -- each day -- as it comes and goes, and I'll not stand much more.

Alec.

You're jwalous, I suppose, because I didn't come home last night. I was very considerate. I only did it, because you say you don't like to see me drunk.

Tess

It makes little difference.

Alec.

Yes, so long as you get your pay.

Tess

That is all. All I expect. That was the only reason why I came to you. You know it. When a woman sells herself she deserves only her pay.

Alec.

But when a man buys a woman he expects a smile sometimes. You're disgustingly ungrateful. Look at the pretty things you have.

Tess.

I hate them.

Alec.

And all I've done for those brother and sister brats of yours

Tess

If you had given freely, it would have been a noble act of charity. As it is, it is part of the price. Say no more of it.

Alec.

Well you get it, and that good old mother of yours, a fine specimen of virtue, helps quick to spend it.

Tess

(Rising.) You may say what you please of me -- but respect my mother at least, that quality you took from me. (Sits again.) Are you going to eat breakfast?

Alec.

No, I'm going to bed.

Tess

Then I'll ring to have it taken away.
(Goes to L. and rings.)

Alec.

(Throwing money at her feet.)
There's all my leavings.

Tess.

(Quietly.) Thank you.
(He goes out and bangs the door.)

Tess.

(Sitting on the couch.)
How long can I stand this?

Alec.

Yes, so long as you get your pay.

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(Quietly.) Thank you.
(He goes out and bangs the door.)

Tess.

(Sitting on the couch.)
How long can I stand this?

(Pointing to the money.)
for that.
(She picks it up as if it sickened her and puts it in an envelpope and directs it.)
Mrs. Joan Durbeyfield. Marlot. Wessox County. Mother you may not have many more of these.

Alec.
(Voice from the next room.)
Come and close this window, it's beastly chilly here.

Tess.
I am coming.
(She goes out R. and closes the door after her.) ANGEL CLARE enters C. He looks round in bewilderment. He has changed greatly, and looks very thin, and ill. Marion comes to the door behind him which she has left open. She starts.)

Marion.
(Aside in a hoarse whisper.)
I knew he was not dead.
(Tess comes in. She closes the door behind her. Marion who has come a step forward - retreats.)

Marion.
God! What's going to happen!
(She goes out and closes the door.) Tess turns and comes forward a step. She sees Clare, and stands like one frozen. He holds out his arms. She dos not move. They fall to his side. She stands in horror ~~near~~ near the door. He goes to her. She seems to be trying to cover up all that is back of her.)

Claire.
(Heartbrokenly.)
Tess, can't you forgive me for going away? Can't you? Can't you come back to me? I forgave you long ago. I have been ill -- very ill - for months.

Tess
It is too late.

Claire.
Oh, don't say that. I was wrong, I know. I was cruel to judge you so harshly. It was my great misery that drove me from you. I did not see you as you were, a good, pure woman. But I have learned -- I understand now, and I am to ask you to forgive me. I love you and we will never part.

Tess

Too late. Too late. Don't come near me! Angel! No you must not. Keep away.

Clare.

Is your love dead? Have I killed it, or is it because I am such a wreck? You cannot be so fickle -- my mother and my father will welcome you.

Tess

(Almost shrieks.) But I say -- I say it is too late. Don't you know all? Don't you know it? You must. How did you come here if you did not know it?

Clare.

I received a strange note. When I arrived, I searched for you you everywhere. I went to your mother who told me at last you were at Sandbourne. I did not expect to find you in a town.

(Looks round.)

Like this. I inquiried here and found you.

Tess

Oh I waited and waited, but you did not come. I wrote and wrote and you did not come. Still I believed. I trusted. I waited till he lied -- he lied to me -- he said he knew-- he said that you were dead.

Clare

He? I do not understand.

Tess

I am with him. Alec. He is there. He gave me these -- all these, and helped us. I loved you all along. I hate him because he lied. He said that you were dead and you are not. Now go -- go.

Clare

(In a half whisper.) That man -- again -- between us.

Tess

(In a whisper.) Go --- will you go?

(He turns and goes blindly from the room. Tess sinks upon her knees, clasps her arms round her head, rocks back and forth and moans.)

Alec.

(Voice from the next room.)

What's the matter? Who's with you?

Tess

(Rising.) I hate him because I believed.

(She opens the door a little.)
Alec, he has returned.

Alec
(From next room.) Who has?

Tess
The man you said was dead. My husband.

Alec.
(Roaring with laughter.)
Ha, ha, ha, ha. A little late, isn't he?
(Tess clinched her fists.)
Well I'm your husband now, I foot the bills. Give him my love. Ha, ha! The cockold!
(Tess hastily closes the door and walks madly up and down as if looking for something. She walks into a table, tries to put it aside, sees the carving knife and becomes as rigid as a statue.)
Repeating Clare's words.
That man --, again -- between us.
(The idea grows in her face. She takes the knife slowly, hides it in the folds of her dress, goes to the door softly, opens it and goes in. There is a silence, then a strange cry, then more, but muffled as if with a pillow. Tess comes out flying. She close closes the door and stands there listening. She opens it and looks in. All is still. She goes madly about the room like a suffering animal trying to find something, then tries to think. She finds a stain on the lace of her gown, tears it off carefully, but don't know what to do with it. She finally drops it behind the toilet table. She fixes her hair in the glass, begins to take off her wrapper, puts it on again, pins up the train of the skirt, takes a long cloak with a cape from behind the screen, puts it on, also her hat. All with great deliberation.)
My gloves!
(She goes out right, returns with them, holding up her skirt. She locks the door, crosses to the mantel, and hide the key in a vase, then turns to go out. Clare stands in the doorway.)

Clare
I cannot leave you Tess, no matter what has happened.
(She signals him to be silent.)

Tess
I have done it. I don't know how, but I owed it to you. I knew I should some day, when I struck him with my glove. I

hated him. He called you a vile name. I have killed him, Alec. Don't you understand? I have killed him.

(She takes his hand trustingly and they go softly out.)

-:- C U R T A I N -:-

-:- A C T I V -:-

Scene 2:- (The Heathen temple at Stonehinge. Great pillars rise to the sky. To the right far below through them is seen a vast plain. It is not yet dawn.)

TESS and CLARE enter through the vines at L.

Tess

I am so tired Angel. Do you think they are following us?

Clare

No, no, my darling, there's no one following us, don't think of that.
(But he look round.)

Tess

Let us rest here.

Clare

Let us move on. We shall find better shelter.

Tess

No, no, here we are with nature. Let us stay. The whole of the world outside is pian. Here it is rest.

Clare

But this place can be seen for miles around when the sun rises.

Tess

It will be just as well, Angel, I care not now. I have been happy - very happy. Let us wait for them - I am ready. I am content. I have had my share of happiness these last, few onl days we have spent together, and yet I must be wicked, Angel, to be happy now. How can I, yet I am? How did I do that? How could I - I - who never harmed a fly.

Clare.

Don't think of ~~xxxx~~ it. You've lost your reason, Tess. 'Tis

often so. It will come back again. Forget it.

Tess

It's true what I told you. I cannot put it from me. It does not trouble me, yet I want to die. 'Tis only a few days, anyway. What must come must. I want to die because I could not bear to live and know that you despise me.

Clare

I never could do that.

Tess

But others will and you would see it. I don't wish to outlive by one second your present love for me. It cannot last

Clare

Always.

Tess

Ah!

Clare

I cannot help but love you.

Tess

Promise to look after Abraham and the rest.

Clare

I will.

Tess

See that Liza grows up - good.

Clare

I shall.

Tess

Thanks love, now let me sleep.

Clare

Try -- try to move on.

Tess

I am so tired -- so tired. Let me sleep here. Was this an altar?

Clare

Yes.

Tess

Did they, the ancients sacrifice to God here?

Clare

No dear.

Tess

To whom?

Clare

To the sun, I think.

Tess

Ah!

(With a strange smile.)

The sun will be up soon. I am so sleepy.

(He fixes her cloak on the slab and makes a pillow. She lies down, he covers her with his coat and sits on the slab near her head.)

Give me your hand. Kiss me once again, my love. I am so happy. Remember!

(She drops asleep -- he does not stir. The sky grows faintly pink.- Clare looks up. There is a slight crackling of branches at R.)

Clare

They are coming. What she said was true.

(Five or six men enter at back silently. Clare holds up his hand.)

Clare

Do not wake her.

(They silently take off their hats and stand round They have an air of absolute respect. Sky grows redder. Tess moves.)

Tess

Angel dear.

Clare

Yes.

Tess

The sun has come.

(She moves, getting near him.)

I love you.

(She realizes that they are not alone. She does not look round, she shows no fear. She puts her arms around his neck and kisses him, then makes a move as if to rise to go.)

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ALEC STOKE-D'URBERVILLE		CHARLES COGHLAN
JOHN DURBEYFIELD (otherwise Sir John)		JOHN JACK
ABRAHAM DURBEYFIELD		ALICE PIERCE
FARMER CRICK		W. L. BRANSCOMBE
JONATHAN, TIM, JAMES	dairymen	WILFRID NORTH, ALFRED HICKMAN, W. E. BUTTERFIELD
BAILIFF		W. L. BRANSCOMBE
JOAN DURBEYFIELD		MARY E. BARKER
TESS		MRS. FISKE
'LIZA LU		EDITH WRIGHT
MARIAN, IZZ, RETTY	dairymaids	ANNIE IRISH, NELLIE LINGARD, BIJOU FERNANDEZ

Constables, etc.

ACT I.—Crick's dairy farm.

ACT II.—An old manor house (two months later).

ACT III.—The Durbeyfields' cottage at Marlott (one year later).

ACT IV.—SCENE 1—Alec's lodgings at Sandbourne (six months later).

☞ The curtain will remain down one minute.

SCENE 2—Stonehenge, the ruins of the Druid Temple (one week later).

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